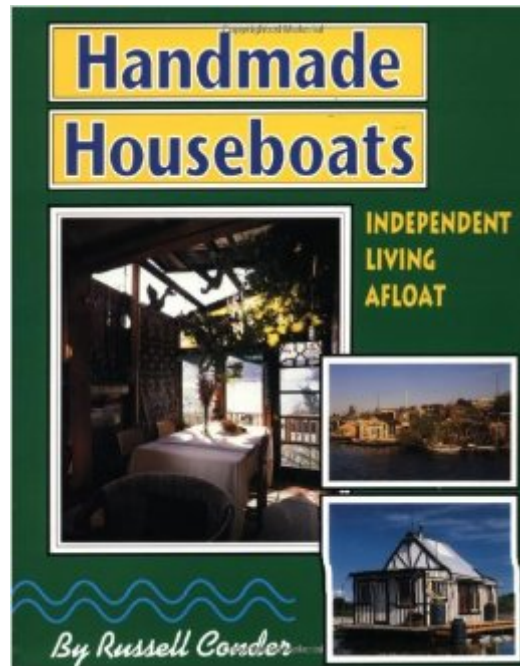


The book was found

# Handmade Houseboats: Independent Living Afloat



## Synopsis

Water-loving people of modest means have lived aboard houseboats for centuries, and why not? Unlike expensive, cramped, and hard-to-build liveaboard cruising boats, spacious, homey houseboats are easily and economically constructed from common lumberyard materials. And unlike those high-priced waterfront cottages, there's no lawn to mow and often no property taxes. And if you don't like the new neighbors, just up anchor and be off. This book tells those who would live afloat how to design and build their own place on the water. There are detailed plans and building instructions for sample houseboats; help with designing a personalized houseboat from scratch; resource-stingy contrivances for easing life aboard, including a solar oven, a windmill-powered washing machine, and innovative power-, water-, and waste-management systems; and more.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (22 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #848,336 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in [Books > Engineering & Transportation > Transportation > Ships > Boat Building](#) #851 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Boating](#) #2602 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Water Sports](#)

## Customer Reviews

I enjoyed the book as it was very informative, but it needs revising in some important areas.1. namely the barrels - never use steel as they will rust out in under a year. Furthermore, plastic barrels can be bought for under \$ each. Black barrels are the best as they won't split under pressure like the blue ones sometimes do. All bungs must be siliconed on the thread and on top of the bung and under the bung. This is very important, as many bungs have a nodule in the middle which houses a pin-prick pressure release valve - which will blow under waves or pressure, letting water in. The silicon can be an expensive marine grade,(a cheaper waterproof silicon used in aquariums might be ok), but never use marine 'Sicaflex' as it's as good as using chewing-gum!2. The flat-roof

waterproofing ideas quoted have been superseded by fantastic super stretchy waterproof rubberised paint which has a 20 year guarantee. Available from building waterproof specialists.

I decided to build my own houseboat. I found little on the subject until I read this book. It gives construction information, suggests floorplans, and is a great guide for the uninformed. It is filled with practical information about houseboats, electrical information (including 110 vac, 12 vdc, generators and even solar) plumbing, and waste disposal. All in all, the best book on the subject I've found to date. I just returned this book to the Library and have just bought it through .com. I think that says it all. A must have for anyone thinking about building a houseboat.

I read this book, and in August 2005 built a floating 10x12' shed housing a 12kw generator on a 12'x20' barge floating on 34 plastic 55 gallon drums using the methods described in this book. I bought those drums for \$11 a piece, and found out later they can be had for \$8 or maybe even for free. Yeah, the information may be old, but it's still good. It's a way to get yourself out on the water for pennies on the dollar of what you'd have to pay to buy a used commercially built houseboat, and it'll be new and things inside it will work, and not need constant fixing. I had the barge itself built in 3 days, helped mostly by an unruly 12 year old. It could have easily been 36 x 12' and had a nice little house on it. One caveat: You won't be able to insure a craft built using this method. Even if you don't build using the barrel raft method, there's lots of other good information in the book about houseboats, and I like the Jimmy Buffetesque attitude that the author seems to have.

Handmade houseboats is a fun book, but if you really want to live on a boat and you don't have an extremely sheltered bit of water that is shallow enough so that your boat can't sink, I would suggest looking elsewhere for actual plans. This guy talks about living on boats in all sorts of waters, but he seems to be thinking about living in a swamp. On the other hand, he does have some pretty solid advice about the history of houseboats, and the domestic needs of houseboat dwellers. I particularly liked his advice on electrical systems. This is a great armchair book.

Although this book is a little dated, it is the holy bible of "character" homemade houseboats. Some corrections include: 1. Steel barrels - they won't last 4 months in salt water. 2. Standard 220 litre plastic barrels are available at barrel recycling centres in most cities...75%-80% of the underside of your boat should contain barrels. 3. Most barrels (white, black or blue) are ok to use, but check the bung lid as some have pin-prick pressure release valves in the middle which will blow under

pressure (and give you that "sinking" feeling!).4. Seal the bungs with a thin coat of plumbers grade silicon, not too much or you will dislodge the rubber seal, and don't over-tighten the bung.5. Never use fibreglass on flat roofs as it doesn't give and will split. Instead use plywood, which can nowadays be sealed with super-stretchy rubberised paint available at waterproof specialist shops. The main problem with this book is that the author seems to love living in swamps - it doesn't have to be that way - have a look at my two boats on the Noosa River, Australia on my website [...]

First off, its important not to get the kind of boats this author is writing about mixed up with the strange beasts seen on Lake Powell - Conder is describing homes that float rather than those that move around at (relatively) high speed. This is the best book I've come across if you are planning on building a houseboat. Some of the reviewers below criticize it for being dated. True: the prices of materials are off. But most of the information is right on and fairly timeless (Barron's comments [below] are simply not accurate - the book was first released in 1992 - not '53 as he states - he must be writing about another book). The book is inspirational in that it serves to remind the reader that there's more to life than a house on a quarter acre with a mortgage. The bottom line is that this book offers all the information needed to plan, build, launch and live in a floating home.

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